

**Assessments; Estimates; Goals and Priorities; Strategies; and Progress Reports -
Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use of Title I
Funds of Innovation and Expansion Activities**

Workforce Investment Act System

The Rehabilitation Act provides remedies and plans for state agencies that do not achieve required performance standards. State Plan Attachment 4.11(e)(2) addresses Unified Plan requirements in their entirety. This attachment clearly demonstrates:

- 1) The public vocational rehabilitation program's descriptions as to achievement of all goals and strategies established in the State Plan attachments 4.11 (c)(1) and 4.11 (d).
- 2) All goals are being achieved.
- 3) The Division of Rehabilitation Services in South Dakota exceeds all standards and indicators pursuant to performance standards in the Rehabilitation Act.
- 4) As evidenced in the Attachment 4.2c and in the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS or Division) report to the Governor, there is an evaluation of progress made in improving the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program from the prior year.

Performance outcomes of the vocational rehabilitation program are summarized for and addressed to the Workforce Development Council as well as the state rehabilitation councils.

Progress in Accomplishing Strategies and Goals

This section of the State Plan is a summary of the progress in accomplishing the Strategies and Goals as identified in Division of Rehabilitation Services (Division or DRS) FFY 2012 State Plan Attachments 4.11(c)(1) and 4.11(d).

Goal 1: A VR Services delivery system that results in enhanced earnings, employee benefits, retention and career advancement for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Strategy 1.1: Improve consumer retention of employment status;

Outcomes: The Division has established a baseline for retention starting with FFY 2012. This is the percentage of closed cases that have had at least one previous case within the past 3 years. The average percent of retention is 24.09%. The ratings by Districts are: Aberdeen – 19.05%, Brookings - 30.9%, Rapid City - 23.72%, Sioux Falls – 23.34%, and Yankton - 23.3%. This is being monitored quarterly and identifying reasons why one office is higher in repeat cases than the other offices.

Strategy 1.2: Track the earnings for SSA beneficiaries and implement actions to increase the earnings and employment rate of consumers who are SSA beneficiaries;

Outcomes: The Division continues to serve a high percent of individuals who are Social Security Beneficiaries. The weekly earnings have increased from \$187.88 (FFY 2011) to \$194.58 (FFY 2012). The following chart shows the outcomes for SSA closures for FFY 2012:

	FFY 2011	FFY 2012
Success Rate	50%	53%

Percent of SSA Closed Cases	33.8%	36.45%
Average Weekly Earnings	\$187.88	\$194.58

Strategy 1.3: Provide specialized support services based upon individual's unique needs to keep their employment;

Outcomes: The Division has provided training to VR Counselors and providers on how to utilize person centered planning techniques and more effectively identify the natural supports by the consumer, family members, case managers, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. The Division is promoting the Employment First initiative in South Dakota and has been providing training to VR personnel and providers. The Division has also conducted a comprehensive survey of training needs for providers.

Strategy 1.4: Evaluate and respond to the needs of service providers;

Outcomes: The Division has recently conducted a comprehensive survey of training needs for providers. A total of 79 survey responses were received and the majority of providers receiving funding from the Vocational Rehabilitation Program were represented in the survey. The majority (67%) of the providers had a Bachelor's degree with about 14% of the providers having also a Master's degree. The survey also reflected that a majority of the providers have a considerable number of years' experience in providing job placement and job coaching. The information from the training needs assessment is being utilized in future provider trainings by video conference and the annual conference.

Strategy 1.5: Strengthen the Benefits Specialists services for VR consumers;

Outcomes: The Division has a Benefits Specialist available to all the District Offices. During FFY 2012, 236 individuals had Benefits Specialists services identified on their Individualized Plan for Employment. This was a 181% increase from FFY 2010. The Division also monitors the level of benefits counseling services on the annual case file reviews. The case file review completed in April 2012 showed 43% of the SSA Beneficiaries received this service. Even though this is low, it is an increase from the previous year of 31.7%.

Strategy 1.6: Strengthen the Ticket to Work initiatives for Social Security beneficiaries;

Outcomes: The Ticket to Work Program continues to grow for the Division. As of FFY 2012, the Division had assigned 1,674 Tickets and received \$530,681 in Ticket payments. As of FFY 2011, the Division had assigned 1,403 Tickets and received \$346,347 in Ticket payments.

Strategy 1.7: Increase work experience opportunities for adults with disabilities.

Outcomes: The Division utilizes a variety of work experience opportunities for adults with disabilities to include Employment Skills Program (paid work experience), on the job training and job coaching. During FFY 2012, the Employment Skills program has increased 18.5% to \$64,011 paid; on the job training has increased 7.2% to \$75,399 paid; and job coaching has increased 11.7% to \$201,753 paid.

Strategy 1.8: Promote the development & utilization of vocational skills training for individuals in South Dakota.

Outcomes: The Division continues to use a variety of vocational skills training opportunities for VR clients. The Division is working with a variety of agencies to establish a pilot initiative with the Think College approach for post-secondary training for individuals with cognitive disabilities. The Division continues to promote and expand the Project Skills program that increased 20% to 457 students in FFY 2012. The Division has also increased an additional Project SEARCH site in Brookings. In FFY 2012, the percent of clients receiving training services (RSA2 data) was 31.47%. This percent has been similar in the previous two years but in FFY 2007 the percent was 26.59%.

Strategy 1.9: Meet or exceed performance levels established for the Performance Indicators under Evaluation Standard 1- Employment Outcomes & Standard 2 – Equal Access to Services (established in 34 CFR Sec. 361.84(c)(1) of the Federal Regulations).

Outcomes: The Division has met all seven indicators for FFY 2012. A detail of the results are located at the end of this report.

Goal 2: A strong statewide community with DRS presence and partnerships with business, service providers, schools and service organizations.

Strategy 2.1: Raise awareness and understanding of different disabilities and consumer's strengths that they bring to the work place;

Outcomes: The Division has done a number of activities to meet this strategy. They consist of:

- The Sioux Falls DRS Office continues to work with the Sioux Falls Disability Awareness Commission that provides disability awareness training to schools and employers.
- The Division sponsored disability awareness trainings to employers, providers, schools and community organizations in 12 communities during FFY 2012.
- The Division provided training for VR Counselors about specific disorders/disabilities through the use of medical consultants, regional trainings, state-wide trainings and webinars.
- The Division is involved in the Mayor's Advisory Boards in Sioux Falls, Watertown, Brookings, Yankton, Aberdeen and Rapid City.

Strategy 2.2: Strengthen partnerships with the business community;

Outcomes: The Division has done a number of activities to meet this strategy. They consist of:

- The Division continues funding the Sioux Falls Business Resource Network and has a staff member on their board.
- The Division is a member of the Society for Human Resource Managers (SHRM) and Chamber of Commerce in Yankton, Sioux Falls, Aberdeen and Rapid City.
- Provide diversity training with business through BRN, ERN and NDEAM.
- The Sioux Falls DRS Office and the SF Business Resource Network has enlisted employers to be involved with VR Clients in interviewing, job shadowing and presentations.
- The Division has developed Business Advisory Committees in Sioux Falls and Aberdeen in conjunction with Project SEARCH.

Strategy 2.3: Strengthen partnerships with organizations serving Native Americans and other minorities with disabilities;

Outcomes: The Division has done a number of activities to meet this strategy. They consist of:

- The Sioux Falls DRS Office continues working with the Multi-Cultural Center to better serve minorities with disabilities.
- The Division sponsored the 2012 Fall Conference with the theme of working with Native Americans with disabilities and collaborating with the Tribal VR programs in South Dakota.
- The Division continues working with the four Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Programs in regular meetings and networking.
- The Division had two public meetings during FFY 2012 on the Reservations to solicit input from Native Americans with disabilities.

Strategy 2.4: Coordinate vocational rehabilitation services with the elementary and secondary school systems;

Outcomes: The Division has done a number of activities to meet this strategy. They consist of:

- The Division continues working with secondary schools to promote Project Skills and Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
- The Division continues to co-fund the Transition Services Liaison Project that provides technical assistance and outreach to elementary and secondary school systems.
- The Division sponsored 5 regional transition forums during FFY 2012.

Strategy 2.5: Strengthen working relationships with entities, agencies, and organizations to enhance the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services to underserved rural areas.

Outcomes: The Division has done a number of activities to meet this strategy. They consist of:

- The Division has funded the Sioux Falls Business Leadership Network website to enhance the delivery of services.
- The Division has provided training and information to providers and other agencies in regards to the VR process and VR services along with individual representatives delivering these services.
- The Division continued to promote the utilization of providers in rural areas and has made training available for providers.

Strategy 2.6: Strengthen the extended services for assuring successful employment for supported employment consumers.

Outcomes: The Division has done a number of activities to meet this strategy. They consist of:

- The Division is working with the Division of Developmental Disabilities to implement an Employment First initiative in South Dakota.
- The Division participates in the Core Stake Holders Advisory council and the Alliance for Full Participation initiative that promotes the extended services for supported employment clients.
- The Division has partnered with the Division of Developmental Disabilities in providing training to providers of extended services.
- The Division conducts an annual conference to include a series of training sessions for providers.

Goal 3: DRS Consumers will have the skills, motivation and supports necessary for to make an informed choice for successful daily living, money management, personal and work relationships.

Strategy 3.1: Implement new strategies and tools for the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors in assessing the motivational state for VR consumers as to their desire for employment.

Outcomes: The Division has done a number of activities to meet this strategy. They consist of:

- The Division has completed training for all counselors on Cognitive Motivation Interviewing.
- The Division has implemented a contract with PNA Change Consultants to provide technical assistance and additional training to VR Counselors.
- The Division has established a work group representing VR Counselors from each District Office in implementing Motivational Interviewing Tools to assess the stage of change for eligible consumers.
- The Division has implemented an assessment tool to evaluate the individual's stage of change.

Strategy 3.2: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors will utilize new strategies and tools for assessing critical strengths and deficits in the consumer's personal life status and skills.

Outcomes: The Division has done a number of activities to meet this strategy. They consist of:

- The Division has made available to VR Clients the use of Workkeys Assessment, the WOWI, and other assessments.
- The Division has revised and implemented the pre-assessment and the post-assessment for assessing an individual's stage of change. Training has been provided to all VR Counselors on these assessment tools and all new eligible cases are to have the pre-assessment completed.

Strategy 3.3: Build the assessments into the initial VR process.

Outcomes: The Division has done a number of activities to meet this strategy. They consist of:

- The Division has provided training to all VR Counselors on the pre-assessment and the post assessment tools. The pre-assessment is to be completed on all new eligible consumers.
- VR Counselors are now required to complete the rational for goal selection and services for clients who jointly develop an Individualized Plan for Employment.
- The Division purchased Situational Assessments for 243 applicants/clients during FFY 2012.
- The Division purchased Independent Living Evaluation/Services for 53 applicants/clients during FFY 2012.

Strategy 3.4: Develop potential provider supports for life skills development.

Outcomes: The Division has done a number of activities to meet this strategy. They consist of:

- The Division is a partner in the South Dakota Employment Provider Training series that is held by video conference at the end of each month. This training series is part of the State Employment Leadership Network.
- The Division provides an annual employment specialists training that includes developing on-going supports for individuals with disabilities.
- The Division purchased Independent Living Evaluation/Services for 53 applicants/clients during FFY 2012.

Strategy 3.5: Increase the utilization of self-employment as an employment outcome for VR consumers.

Outcomes: The Division has done a number of activities to meet this strategy. They consist of:

- The Division refers all VR clients to the SD Business Development Center for assistance in putting their business plan together.
- The Division closed successfully 14 individuals in self-employment during FFY 2012. This was an increase by one individual from the previous year.
- The Division includes a description of self-employment to all applications when they apply for VR Services.

Goal 4: Students will enter their adult lives capable of self-advocacy with sufficient experience to make choices about work and career, being appropriately supported and living as independently as possible.

Strategy 4.1: Coordinate vocational rehabilitation services for VR consumers who are attending post-secondary programs;

Outcomes: The Division has done a number of activities to meet this strategy. They consist of:

- The Division sponsored the Youth Leadership Forum, which enabled 43 students with disabilities to attend the weeklong self-advocacy training program during FFY 2012. (to attend the week long Youth Leadership Program.)
- The Division sponsored 4 Catch the Waive Events during FFY 2012 where students with disabilities had the opportunity to attend a one day workshop on a college campus to learn about preparing for college life, securing appropriate accommodations, and developing self-advocacy and communication skills.
- Each District Supervisor has met with the public universities with the Disability Coordinators in their District area.
- The Division sponsored a one day workshop for post-secondary disability services coordinators on disability specific topics and to share information and resources.

Strategy 4.2: Increase and strengthen transition services for eligible students who are exploring their employment future;

Outcomes: The Division has done a number of activities to meet this strategy. They consist of:

- During FFY 2012, the Division funded 457 students with disabilities in the Project Skills program. This was an increase of 20% from the previous year.
- The Transition Services Liaison Project has continued providing training to Special Education teachers on the use of South Dakota My Life tools in case planning.
- The Division sponsored 43 students with disabilities during FFY 2012 to attend the week long Youth Leadership Program.
- The Division sponsored 4 Catch the Waive Events during FFY 2012 where students with disabilities had the opportunity to attend a one day workshop on a college campus to learn about preparing for college life, securing appropriate accommodations, and developing self-advocacy and communication skills.(spend a day at a college campus and hear presentations.)
- The Rapid City DRS Office has partnered with the Disability Employment Initiative.

Strategy 4.3: Educate teachers, students and their parents about Vocational Rehabilitation Services;

Outcomes: The Division has done a number of activities to meet this strategy. They consist of:

- The Division Counselors continue to meet with Guidance Counselors and the teachers of the schools in their territory at least once a year to introduce themselves, discuss VR services offered, promote invitation to student's IEPs, and promote referrals of students on 504 plans.
- Counselors attend IEP's on a regular basis to explain our services.
- The Division invites teachers to the annual fall conference and regional transition forums.
- The Division sponsored 10 regional transition forums to promote services to teachers, students and their parents.

Strategy 4.4: Expand transition services that have demonstrated effectiveness through evidence based practices such as Indicator 14. Indicator 14 is the outcome measure a year after high school for students who were on an Individual Education Plan.

Outcomes: The Division has done a number of activities to meet this strategy. They consist of:

- The Division sponsors and promotes the utilization of good practices in school systems identified as being successful to improve long-term outcomes for students. (Project Skills, Project Search, Youth Leadership Forum, Catch the Wave).
- The Transition Services Liaison Project maintains and updates a website with a resource list of transition documents, assessment tools and activities.

Federal Program Evaluation Standards

In accordance with the provisions of the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education proposed the following evaluation standards (see Federal Register Vol.63, No. 198 issued on October 14, 1998 on Proposed Rules, pages 55292- 55305). The proposed standards 1 and 4 are based on section 106 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P. L. 105-220 of August 7, 1998), which contains the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act. The proposed standards 2, 3, and 5 are not based on the Workforce Investment Act, but the Secretary believes that they are important factors in successful rehabilitation programs. Standards 1 and 2 have been finalized as published in the Federal Register Vol.65, No. 108 issued on June 5, 2000, pages 35792 - 35801. The remaining standards have not yet been finalized.

Standard 1: Employment Outcomes

Standard 1 is based on section 106 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P. L. 105-220 of August 7, 1998), which contains the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act. This standard requires an agency to assist eligible individuals with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, to obtain, maintain, or regain high quality employment outcomes. The quality of an employment outcome is based on whether the outcome is consistent with the individual's vocational choices; is in competitive, self-employment, or BEP employment; maintains or increases the individual's earnings; and allows medical insurance plans covering hospitalization. The following six performance indicators measure minimum compliance with this standard.

- 1.1. Compare the total numbers of individuals obtaining an employment outcome during the current and previous performance periods.
- 1.2. Measure the number of persons obtaining an employment outcome as a percentage of all persons exiting the program after receiving VR services.
- 1.3. Measure the number of persons obtaining a competitive, self-employment, or BEP employment outcome as a percentage of all persons obtaining any type of employment outcome. **Primary Indicator**
- 1.4. Measure the percentage of competitively employed individuals who have significant disabilities. **Primary Indicator**
- 1.5. Measure the average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-employment, or BEP employment with earnings levels equivalent to at least the minimum wage as a ratio to the State's average hourly earnings for all individuals in the State who are employed. **Primary Indicator**
- 1.6. Measure the difference between the percentage of individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-employment, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage who report their own income as their largest single source of economic support and the percentage of individuals in that employment who reported their own income as their largest single source of support at the time they applied for VR services.

Standard 2: Equal Access to Services

Standard 2 requires compliance with one performance indicator which measures equality of access to rehabilitation services.

- 2.1. Measure whether individuals from minority backgrounds have been provided services at the same rate as non-minority individuals.

Assessment of the State VR Agency in meeting the Performance Standards and Indicators

The Division of Rehabilitation Services has been monitoring the development of the performance standards and indicators. Utilizing the FFY 2012 data, the Division's performance was evaluated in meeting the minimum requirements for Standards 1 and 2. The following chart displays the outcome of this assessment.

Standard/Indicator	Minimum Requirement	Division's Outcome	Indicator Met
Standard 1: Employment Outcomes	4 of the 6 Indicators and 2 of the 3 Primary Indicators	6 of the 6 Indicators and 3 Primary Indicators were met	
Indicator 1.1	719	823	Yes
Indicator 1.2	55.8%	61.65%	Yes
Indicator 1.3 *	72.6%	100%	Yes
Indicator 1.4 *	62.4%	98.54%	Yes

Indicator 1.5 *	\$9.14 (estimated)	\$9.27	Yes
Indicator 1.6	53%	62.89%	Yes
Standard 2: Equal Access to Services	The Indicator must be met	The Indicator was met	
Indicator 2.1	80%	80.33%	Yes

* Designates Primary Indicators

Past Utilization of Innovation and Expansion Funds - DRS

Section 101 (a)(18) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as Amended requires the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency to reserve and use a portion of the funds for:

(i) The development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the findings of the statewide assessment and goals and priorities of the State; and

(ii) To support the State Rehabilitation Council and the Statewide Independent Living Council.

Prior to the 1998 Amendments of the Rehabilitation Act, the Division of Rehabilitation Services was required to utilize 1.5% of the Federal 110 funds for Innovation and Expansion (I&E) activities. The Division continues to use these funds at an increased percentage. During the 2012 State Fiscal year, \$137,711 was spent for I&E activities through a contract with the South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities to provide staff support for the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the State Independent Living Council. The contract provides for the following:

- ✓ Support staff for the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Statewide Independent Living Council contracted through the South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities. This includes wages and benefits for .9 FTE Board support staff.
- ✓ Operational costs, equipment and travel for support staff and office supplies paid through the South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities.
- ✓ Costs involved in having members of the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation or the Statewide Independent Living Council attend meetings/training.
- ✓ Strategic Planning Initiatives approved by the Board of VR to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the findings of the statewide assessment and goals and priorities of the State.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services budgets approximately \$140,000 annually for support services and strategic planning activities for both the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Statewide Independent Living Council. Expenditures for the strategic planning activities for FY 2012 consist of the following:

\$68.36	Golden Buffalo Casino – Lower Brule - Joint Public Meeting with BVR, SILC, B/SBVI
\$2,000.00	Support of the 2012 Dare to Dream Conference
\$300.00	Black Hills Trading Post – Give away items for public meeting in Lower Brule

\$1,350.00	Financial support of the Aberdeen Area Human Resource Association for the 2012 Statewide SHRM Conference
\$12,000.00	Financial support of the 2012 NDEAM events
\$3,000.00	Financial support of the 2012 Governors Awards Ceremony
\$452.41	BVR meeting with the Sioux Falls Business Resource Network
\$482.85	Purchased “Creativity Unleashed” books for each board member (featured SD artists with disabilities – artwork, photography and poetry)
19,653.62	Total Expenditures